

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed March 28, 2001, the Examiner rejected claims 2-16 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. In addition, the Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 7 and 13-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), as being anticipated by Lehman (U.S. Patent No. 5,972,479). The Examiner allowed claims 6, 8-12 and 22-30 and indicated that the claims would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By this paper, claims 2-23 and 25-29 have been amended and claim 31 has been added to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the novel and unobvious subject matter of this invention. In addition, claims 1 and 24 have been canceled without prejudice. Thus, following amendment by this paper, claims 2-23 and 25-45 are presented for examination. For the reasons set forth below, these claims are believed to be in condition for allowance.

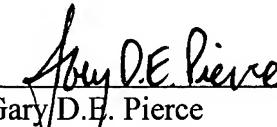
The Examiner has deemed the subject matter of claims 6, 8-12 and 22-30 to be allowable. Contrary thereto, Applicant maintains that the subject matter of claim 1 is novel and nonobvious. Nevertheless, in order to harvest the allowable subject matter, Applicant has cancelled claims 1 and 24, amended claims 2-23 and 25-29 and added claims 31-45 to include the allowable subject matter, as requested by the Examiner. In addition, Applicant notes that claims 2-16 have been amended to provide clear antecedent basis for each of the terms identified by the Examiner. It is submitted, therefore, that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, has been overcome. The remaining amendments to the claims and specification were made to correct minor, technical errors.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the previously pending claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "VERSION OF CLAIMS WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE."

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2-23 and 25-45 are in condition for immediate allowance. In the event the Examiner finds any remaining impediment to the prompt allowance of any of these claims which could be clarified in a telephone conference, the Examiner is respectfully urged to initiate the same with the undersigned

DATED this 30th day of July, 2001.

Respectfully submitted,


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